



2011-2012 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is a non-partisan state agency working toward economic, educational, and social equity, including promoting cooperation and understanding. The Commission identifies, measures, and reviews programs and legislation and researches challenges and opportunities affecting the Hispanic/Latino community. The Commission identifies solutions and provides recommendations to the governor and legislature.

VISION

The Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs will bring together community organizations, State agencies, municipal leaders, and local activists in a collaborative way to address the various challenges facing Hispanics and Latinos and to seek proactive, creative solutions that will have lasting impacts on the State of Indiana.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A focused, step-by-step approach to addressing some of the many challenges facing Hispanics and Latinos throughout the state of Indiana is necessary in order for the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs to affect meaningful, impactful changes over the short, medium, and long terms. This plan, a constantly evolving and malleable working document, creates clear, specific objectives and subsequent strategies to be implemented in response to needs that have been consistently identified in Hispanic and Latino communities across the state.

By organizing these objectives and strategies in a way that utilizes existing subcommittees to carry out short, medium, and long term timelines, ICHLA will be able to set deadlines for the attainment of specific goals and implement strategies clearly and systematically. Ultimately, this will help ICHLA fulfill its mission of working toward economic, educational, and social equity.



CHALLENGE 1: Qualified Child Care Availability and Child Care Business Development

Identifying adequate child care options is of great importance to Latino families throughout the state, as it is with all minority populations. Single-parent households and those in which both parents are employed have a particular need to find quality care for their children, not only to ensure that their children are looked after but also to help instill in their children the critical school-readiness skills that will enable them to begin formal schooling on an even playing field. Too often, child care options available to low-income families do not have the curricula in place to appropriately provide this development to children, something that has already been identified as a significant obstacle for Latinos specifically.

Moreover, many quality Latino-owned child care providers have faced difficulties in renewing their licenses due to linguistic gaps. While the initial licensure process with the State of Indiana can be an adequately bilingual one, the required renewal process three years after licensure is not available at the State level in Spanish. While a federal module exists federally and while this federal certification is accepted at the State level, helping qualified Latino child care businesses navigate a State process in their native language – while also ensuring that they are receiving the English-language courses needed for better business development in the future – would not only have a significant economic impact but push individuals into these important language development programs.

OBJECTIVE 1: ICHLA OJT/Leadership Program

Through a partnership with the Indiana Association of Child Care Resources and Referrals (IACCRR), ICHLA can promote the dissemination of important child care related information to those families most needing of it, both in English and Spanish. Joining forces on a series of workshops in September targeting Spanish-speaking families will help ensure that families throughout the state have access to the information they'll need to make sound and responsible decisions about child care while also gaining access to a database of suitable providers.



In addition, ICHLA will work with IACCRR to support 15 qualified Latino-owned child care businesses in not only obtaining the important certification renewal they'll need to continue operating, but also the critical language development skills that can help them take their businesses to the next level. These businesses will be vetted through the IACCRR process to ensure that they qualify for licensure and are quality businesses with clean records of aptitude.

KEY STRATEGIES

- ☐ IACCRR will identify fifteen (15) child care provider businesses seeking license renewal in Spanish that would otherwise not be able to renew their licenses in English.
- ☐ ICHLA and IACCRR will partner with Indiana's WorkOne Centers throughout the State on the provision on free English-Language development courses for the selected 15 providers. In order to receive support for license renewal, the principals of these businesses will have to enroll and complete the English Language Development course.
- ☐ The selected businesses will enroll in the federal child care license renewal online Spanish-language programs as well as the appropriate Indiana WorkOne English-language development program, and upon completion of the latter will receive cost reimbursement for the licensure course from the IACCRR and funded through ICHLA.
- ☐ IACCRR will report back to ICHLA commissioners quarterly to update commissioners on the status of participants and the program.
- ☐ ICHLA will also be included as a partner for IACCRR's September workshops, a program completely conducted in Spanish for Spanish-speaking families. This will include disseminating information to ICHLA's listserv and including ICHLA logo on appropriate materials.



CHALLENGE 2: School Readiness and Parental Education

Students who enter the formal education setting without age-appropriate school readiness skills can often find themselves falling increasingly behind their peers. It is the responsibility of Latino parents to provide the development of these skills, though many do not have the important information and skills they need to be able to realize this in their children. While schools continue to try to find new ways to engage families rather than individual students, Latino parents must figure out what resources exist that can help them prepare their children for school.

Ensuring that school readiness and early childhood preparation programming is made available to the maximum number of Latino families would be a significant first step in helping to curb some of the over-arching, long-term challenges to Latino academic achievement. Several programs throughout the state of Indiana exist to help families develop appropriate strategies to better prepare their children for formal schooling. Some operate through community centers or social service agencies, while others provide in-home services that model such strategies for parents and work with them to identify short- and long-term best practices.

OBJECTIVE 2: Partnership With the Early Childhood Alliance in Northeast Indiana

Currently, the Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) in Northeast Indiana offers a variety of child skill development and school readiness programs in that part of the state. This includes Parents As Teachers programming in Noble, Steuben, LaGrange, and Whitley counties in addition to other programming offered in Allen County. To date, the ECA has not been able to allocate resources to implement PAT in Allen County, so the opportunity exists to help identify linguistically-isolated Spanish speaking families to whom these services can be extended. Resources will be made available through ICHLA to reach a total of 10 families, and the partnership will also include Spanish-language program marketing and ICHLA involvement on ECA boards and advisory councils. This partnership will mirror ICHLA's current partnership with PAT of Lake County.

KEY STRATEGIES



- ☐ ICHLA and ECA will work to identify 10 Latino, Spanish-speaking families for inclusion in a Parents As Teachers program in Allen County.
- ☐ ICHLA will work with ECA leadership to develop appropriate Spanish-language messaging for public service announcements aimed at recruiting parents for the program and encourage Latino parents to actively advocate for the educational success of their children.
- ☐ ECA will enable one ICHLA commissioner to serve on its board of advisors or directors to ensure that ICHLA objectives are being met.
- ☐ ECA will report to ICHLA commissioners quarterly on project status.

- **OBJECTIVE 3: Partnership with South Bend Latino Task Force for Education**

Improving educational outcomes for Indiana's most vulnerable and at-risk students must become a community-led initiative for long-term impacts to take root. In South Bend, the LTE has brought together an important group of local stakeholders to address some of the most pressing needs of these students, focusing on bringing parents into greater engagement with both the schools and the overall academic schooling process of their children. Replication of this model, in collaboration with other models already demonstrating local impacts in other parts of the state, is critical to helping to foster a statewide approach to education and the sharing of limited resources and intellectual property among similar partners.

This partnership will allow the commission to help LTE develop metrics for their programming, share information with parents through a series of multiple, topical workshops, and extend these ideas and strategies beyond the border of South Bend. Moreover, the



commission will work to develop strategic messaging with LTE on this program as well as on the general need for greater Latino parent engagement and education.

- ☐ ICHLA will co-sponsor a series of 3 workshops in South Bend, using the workshops as a vehicle through which to share important information about the commission, commissioners, and the role they play.
- ☐ ICHLA and LTE will work together to craft and produce at least 3 PSAs, both for audio and visual mediums and in both English and Spanish, to help spread the word about the program and highlight the need for greater engagement by families.
- ☐ One ICHLA commissioner will serve on the board of the LTE in an advisory capacity only to ensure active participation and collaboration between the organizations.
- ☐ ICHLA and LTE will work with other partners to earn local media in an effort to enhance participation in the program, one major challenge and goal for LTE.

CHALLENGE 3: Curbing Recidivism Rates for Latino Youth

Incarcerated youth face significant obstacles re-assimilating into society upon their release, and Latinos are hit particularly hard by a number of these factors. As it stands currently, more than 43% of Latino youths will return to incarceration within three years of their release, a statistic that has staggering consequences and implications for Indiana's economy and those of local communities. A number of strategies have been shown to have a positive effect on curbing recidivism rates to some degree, including mentoring programs that align incarcerated youth and their families with local mentors who can provide them with the wraparound services they'll need to avoid returning to prison.



OBJECTIVE 4: Partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction, Division of Youth Services and the Northeastern Center's *Bienvenido Program*

The Northeastern Center and the State of Indiana Department of Correction, Division of Youth Services are seeking to expand existing partnerships to provide reentry support programming specifically targeted at Latino youth who are incarcerated at the State's juvenile facilities. Through the *Bienvenido Program*, the partnership has provided facilitator trainings for twelve individuals and so far 23 students have participated. One of the very important lynchpins for success, however, are the mentors, and a strong partnership with ICHLA will enable the Northeastern Center to recruit and train additional mentors to provide wraparound services to students completing the program.

Moreover, ICHLA support will enable the Northeastern Center to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the *Bienvenido Program* with respect to Latino youth, identify gaps, and determine ways to improve service in the future. This important step in the process is currently absent in this form and would be instrumental in facilitating better service and program expansion.

KEY STRATEGIES

- ☐ ICHLA and Northeastern Center will work together to identify targeted areas where no mentors currently are located, and ICHLA commissioners will help to identify and recruit mentors for the program.
- ☐ ICHLA will work with Northeastern Center on the development of 3 Spanish-language public service announcements highlighting the importance of Latino parent strategies aimed at curbing recidivism rates to be played in markets throughout the state.
- ☐ ICHLA and Northeastern Center will work together to draft parameters and objectives for metric development and formal evaluation of the *Bienvenido Program* as it relates to incarcerated Latino youth.



- Northeastern Center will provide quarterly updates of trainings and project status to ICHLA commissioners.

CHALLENGE 4: Civic Education and Latino Youth

One of the most pressing obstacles to long-term civic engagement in the Latino community can be traced back to the lack of early civic education. Ensuring that Latino students have a full appreciation for the roles played by lawmakers and agency personnel at the State as well as the overall process of legislating and governing is an important first-step to building true leadership capacity among Latinos in communities throughout Indiana. Making sure that Hispanic affairs are significant considerations at the State level requires a long-term investment in developing a sense of leadership and civic duty among Latino children, a process that can only take root if these children are exposed to the system in the first place.

OBJECTIVE 5: Statewide Latino Youth Day at the Statehouse

For several years, Commissioner Reardon has successfully coordinated Latino Youth Day at the State Capitol, bringing young students from the Northwest Region to the Statehouse to discuss the legislative system, the importance of civic engagement and participation, and the role of the various branches of State government. Building upon these important efforts, ICHLA can work with local school districts throughout Indiana to encourage participation by Latino students in something broader and more reaching, a day bringing together Latino students for a comprehensive look at all aspects of State government. This will include the many elements already in place through Commissioner Reardon's program as well as other suggestions from commissioners, the various agency heads, and the Governor's office in an effort to make the experience as all-encompassing as possible. Engaging State elected officials to help with recruiting and support for the program will also help to create a link between these officials and the Latino communities they serve.



KEY STRATEGIES

- ☐ ICHLA will engage representatives and senators from the legislative districts with the highest Latino populations to garner support for the program, including asking them to reach out to their Latino constituents for participation.
- ☐ ICHLA will set aside resources for the provision of food and, in cases where it may be needed, the subsidization of transportation for school districts unable to transport their students to the Statehouse.
- ☐ ICHLA will recruit guest speakers to address the groups, including both Latino members of the General Assembly, the Governor, and representation from pertinent agencies, to share their experiences in government and reinforce the importance of civic duty and engagement.
- ☐ ICHLA commissioners will be responsible for connecting with their local representation and school districts, as well, to ensure greater cooperation and participation for the event.